

mariners on it. Today, we have less than 80.

We need to rebuild our commercial shipbuilding opportunities. We need to be able to build ships in America for the export of oil and natural gas, a strategic national asset, because our military, while it may fly here and there, it depends upon shipments across the ocean.

□ 2015

I can tell you one thing: We cannot depend upon China, or someone other than our own ships, to deliver our military, wherever they may need to be.

We are going to introduce a bill in the coming weeks that we would call “Energizing the American Maritime Industry.” Thousands upon thousands of jobs in the shipyards of America; and, when those ships come online, thousands of jobs for American mariners and American security.

A better deal for America includes a lot of different elements: Better education system, better wages, better infrastructure, better research, and better family opportunities across this Nation.

I draw the attention of my colleagues—on both the Democratic and Republican side—to where my Republican colleagues had taken the previous hour. They wanted to talk about the tax cut.

Well, I am going to end up with this, some real news headlines a couple of weeks ago: “Republican Tax Cuts to Fuel Historic U.S. Deficits: CBO”—the Congressional Budget Office—as reported April 9, 2018, by Reuters; “Deficit to Top \$1 Trillion Per Year by 2020, CBO Says”—the Congressional Budget Office—reported in The Washington Post on April 9, 2018; “CBO: GOP Policies Add Nearly \$1.6 Trillion to Deficit,” reported by Axios; and “wider than previously expected deficits and a mostly temporary spurt in economic growth,” reported by the Wall Street Journal.

If you are looking for a better deal for America, take a look at what our Democrats are proposing. It is a good program. It covers all of the elements that are necessary to see this country remain the wealthiest, remain the strongest, the most vibrant, the most entrepreneurial, and the most opportunity for every American, no matter where they may start in their life. We want all of them to end up with a better life, and we intend to put before them a better deal.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 5698, PROTECT AND SERVE ACT OF 2018; PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF S. 2372, VETERANS CEMETERY BENEFIT CORRECTION ACT; AND PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2, AGRICULTURE AND NUTRITION ACT OF 2018

Mr. NEWHOUSE, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 115-677) on the resolution (H. Res. 891) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 5698) to amend title 18, United States Code, to punish criminal offenses targeting law enforcement officers, and for other purposes; providing for consideration of the bill (S. 2372) to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide outer burial receptacles for remains buried in National Parks, and for other purposes; and providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 2) to provide for the reform and continuation of agricultural and other programs of the Department of Agriculture through fiscal year 2023, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

AMERICAN WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) for 30 minutes.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the topic of this Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from North Carolina?

There was no objection.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, we are here tonight to talk about a topic that is forefront on the minds of Americans of all ages. It is a topic at dinner tables across the country, and is finally becoming a leading national news story. We are here to talk about workforce development.

The American workforce has undergone a radical transformation in recent years. Right now, there are 6.6 million unfilled jobs in this country in a phenomenon known as the skills gap. Those jobs are unfilled because too many Americans are unskilled, despite the fact that we have record-high numbers of people attending postsecondary education.

At the Education and the Workforce Committee, workforce development is at the heart of what we do. All education is career education, and that means all education is workforce development.

Education, as most of us know, and many of us have experienced, is the

sure path out of poverty for millions of Americans. For all of us, it should give us the tools we need to cultivate the talents God has given us. Whether through a baccalaureate degree, a professional certificate, or any of the new and innovative stackable credentials, Americans look to the educational system for options.

Mr. Speaker, I am joined here tonight by some of my colleagues from the Education and the Workforce Committee.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. GROTHMAN).

Mr. GROTHMAN. Mr. Speaker, as Ms. FOXX has said, we, right now, have the lowest unemployment in years. I think we are doing all we can to improve America's climate. Our taxes are lower. Our regulatory agencies, I think, are the most pro-freedom, pro-business we have had in years.

But the biggest problem that I find again and again, as I go around my district—and I should point out that Wisconsin's Sixth Congressional District has more manufacturing jobs in it than any other district in the country—is that we can't find enough people to work. A little bit of that problem is due to the government competing with the private sector and providing people compensation for not working at all. But a lot of the problem is that our educational system has let America down in that they have turned their back on skills-based training.

I think the number one thing holding back America's industry manufacturing sector right now is a lack of people with skills to do the job, not only manufacturing, but construction, as well. Again and again, we have a shortage of welders, we have a shortage of CNC operators, in construction, shortages all across the board.

If you look at the people who are still working frequently into their fifties and sixties, what is the reason? The reason is this myth out there, perpetrated in part by the mainstream media, but, in part, by the educational establishment, that you should get a vague 4-year degree—a degree in communication arts, a degree in psychology, something like that—which, too often, is leading to a low-paid job and a high-paid college debt.

If, instead, you would go to, let's say, a trade school—as I do in my district—you can have people who become apprentices and make money as they are earning. They can wind up making \$70,000, or \$80,000, or \$90,000 before they are 25 years old, when some of their classmates are still ringing up the debt in the traditional college.

The Higher Education and Workforce Development Subcommittee, as we work through our bills, again and again is looking to fill this gap. We can no longer do this disservice to so many young people, encouraging them down an expensive path that does not lead to a well-paid job.

The future of America depends on its construction and its manufacturing.

We cannot continue to be a great country if our factories do not get some of the best minds and hardest working people to do the work.

So I encourage anyone out there listening—particularly, anyone advising young people, be they professional guidance counselors who have so often let people down, or parents, or grandparents, or other mentors—look into skills-based education. Carefully compare how much people who take this route are making compared to people who go to a 4-year college. Look at how much debt they are ringing up compared to how much debt other people are ringing up.

Mr. Speaker, together, we can work as hard as we can to solve America's skills gap, which is absolutely necessary if the United States continues to become the manufacturing center of the world.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. GROTHMAN for his comments. I agree with Mr. GROTHMAN that this is an issue every American needs to be made more aware of. Many are.

Every week, every day, I meet with people from my district and outside of my district who come in to see me who say that they have jobs in their companies, in their manufacturing plants, and in their restaurants that they cannot fill because they cannot find the people with the skills to fill those jobs. Everyone in this country has a stake in the future of our country, so we are hoping that everyone will wake up to the skills gap and see what part he or she can play in it.

I know that members of the Education and the Workforce Committee have become very well aware of this from their own districts and from their own experiences, many of them as employers before they came to the United States Congress. One of the people that I know that is very attuned to the need in the workforce is our colleague, Mr. RON ESTES, from the great State of Kansas.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. ESTES).

Mr. ESTES of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address one of the important drivers of our economy: The way we develop the workforce of tomorrow.

Since the founding of our country, American workers have led the way in being the most productive and innovative in the world. However, technology and changing demands require that we identify new ways to maintain our competitive edge.

After nearly 10 years of stagnant growth, our economy is, once again, booming, thanks to cutting taxes and cutting regulations. Yet today, our economy faces a new challenge. At this moment, there are a record 6.6 million job openings in our country.

While we currently have the lowest unemployment rate in 18 years, there are still millions of Americans looking for a job. However, every day, I hear from employers throughout Kansas, and our country, about their difficulty

filling open jobs because our workforce does not have all the skills it needs.

I believe this is because, for decades, politicians, educators, and even parents, have told students that the only way to succeed is to get a 4-year college degree. While a college degree is extremely important, some jobs are critical in requiring that. Today, we are seeing that many college students are graduating with crippling student loan debt and have trouble finding a job, while we have a shortage of skilled labor positions, such as welders, machinists, truck drivers, and people with other needed skills.

Because of this, I believe we have no choice but to change the way we are developing our workforce. We need to empower students to have more opportunities to prepare for the careers they want, whether through technical schools, community colleges, or universities.

Kansans have led the way with this by passing Kansas Senate bill S. 155, which allows high school students to graduate with either, or both, a technical or college-ready certificate. Through this effort, I believe Kansans can serve as a model for this country on how we train our workforce.

As a Member of the House Committee on Education and the Workforce, I have been proud to work on several ways to do this, including amending the Prosper Act, which will reform higher education and student aid, to allow students to complete work studies as apprentices in the fields that they are studying.

That amendment will help students to be more marketable once they finish their degrees, and builds on our need to support apprenticeship programs throughout the country. This also helps minimize outlandish student loan debt too many students and families are racking up.

In addition to working on the Prosper Act, I have also proposed the HOPE Act, which will allow TANF assistance dollars to go toward a successful workforce development program, one which is called Jobs for America's Graduates, or JAG.

Earlier this month, I met with some JAG students at Newton High School in Newton, Kansas, and heard about how the program has prepared them for their careers after high school. Allowing more TANF dollars to go toward this program can help many at-risk students and get more people off of assistance and on to successful lives.

These are part of our overall goal of making sure every American can get the skills they need to fulfill their potential.

□ 2030

Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairwoman FOXX and the Education and the Workforce Committee for their work towards this goal. Together, we can advance legislation which will maintain and grow America's leadership in our global economy.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. ESTES for being here tonight.

Mr. Speaker, I want to brag a little on Kansas, also. I had the opportunity last year to visit in Congressman ESTES' district and see firsthand the cooperation going on there among the different levels of education—the high schools, community colleges, State universities—and working with business and industry, particularly the aerospace industry.

Mr. Speaker, I ask Mr. ESTES if he would like to add to his comments about the great program going on there because I, frankly, have gone all over the country and talked about that innovative program that is going on there.

I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. ESTES of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, that is right. We have an innovative aerospace environment in Wichita. In fact, Wichita is known as the air capital of the world. We are always looking for skilled employees to fill those jobs, to help keep planes running, keep parts being produced through the process.

Our businesses have worked with community colleges and partnered with Wichita State University and are partnering with high schools to help make sure that the skills are available so those employers can have the employees that they need to help keep their operations running.

It has been a great transition we have made as we have gone through the baby boomers, who are now starting to retire and starting to leave the workforce. We need to make sure that we have enough skilled employees to replace them as they are retiring and make sure that we keep America's economy growing strong.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I think, again, the program that Mr. ESTES has there in Wichita is a good role model. It is an indication, again, that we are sort of going back to the future.

In the past, most of our education institutions paid attention to where the jobs were in this country and educated people to be prepared for the jobs. There are people who sometimes can be critical of us on the committee for saying that we spend too much time emphasizing people getting a job and perhaps not enough emphasizing a liberal education. Well, I am a huge fan of liberal education. My undergraduate degree is in English, but thank goodness I learned to type in high school because that typing skill is what helped me get through college as I worked my way through.

All of us need skills. English majors of today need skills: computer skills, graphic skills. We don't want to diminish the role of liberal education. We want to just make sure that students have a clear understanding of what their choices are going to be when they enter a postsecondary institution and what they might expect when they exit that institution.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. WALBERG), another

member of our committee who is very well versed in the issues related to workforce development and education, who has done yeoman's work on many issues related to the workforce and education.

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairwoman FOXX for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentlewoman's emphasis on preparing people for the real world through educational experiences that expand not only their abilities, but also their dreams. A lot of times the best education takes place when a person is dreaming. I have seen a lot of things happen in Michigan as a result of people all of a sudden being caught with a sweet spot dream saying, "Could I do that?" and they have done it.

Since coming to Congress, my top priority has been creating good-paying jobs and growing a healthy economy in Michigan. We have had our challenges. We are delighted to see some very positive things taking place in Michigan, and specifically in my district. That is why every year we hold a large job fair at multiple places in my district. We had one just last week, in fact.

Over the years, we have helped the hardworking men and women in our communities find employment, further their education, and pursue career advancement opportunities. That is a key: to let them know that they can advance; they are not stuck; you can always move on.

When we did our first job fair back in 2011, the national unemployment rate was around 9 percent. Now it is down below 4 percent for the first time since 2000.

As our economy continues to thrive, there are currently 6.6 million job openings waiting to be filled across the country, and businesses are anxious to hire workers with the right experience to fill them.

I just met with six of those employers just before coming here, and their only concern is: How do we fill the jobs that we have to take on all the contracted projects in construction that we have?

My colleagues and I on the Education and the Workforce Committee are working in a bipartisan way to help bridge the skills gap by expanding career and technical education.

In today's economy, we need to celebrate the fact that not everyone follows the same path. That is a good thing. We need to move beyond the notion that a 4-year degree is the only way to climb the ladder of opportunity.

In Michigan, we have a number of community colleges, career centers, and school districts leading the way in career and technical education. I think they have heard Chairwoman FOXX speak and they have gotten the point. We let it slide too long, and now we are picking up. These programs have helped numerous students thrive and develop a diverse and marketable skill set that prospective employers are seeking.

The bipartisan legislation we passed in the House will strengthen CTE programs to help more students obtain the in-demand skills and jobs of the future. The House-passed bill will also remove unnecessary and duplicative licensing requirements that act as a barrier for workers trying to get their foot in the door.

Coming from Michigan, we have a long and rich tradition of manufacturing, engineering, and other highly skilled fields. Our State's hardworking men and women are second to none.

I am here tonight to say let's keep up the momentum. Let's continue to invest in building a talented and dynamic workforce and help prepare our people for a lifetime of success. And, oh, may I add, enjoyment in a sweet spot that they have found by being educated for the real-world jobs that make a difference.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for the opportunity to speak on this issue tonight.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressman WALBERG for speaking on tonight's Special Order topic. I appreciate the comments that he has made, and I appreciate the leadership that he has brought to the Education and the Workforce Committee in so many ways.

The gentleman's comments about being with employers tonight mirror the experiences that I have had where, again, every employer that comes to see me says: You know, we love the tax cut bill. It is allowing us to hire more people. The only problem is we can't find people with the skills to take those jobs. So what are we going to do?

So this is an issue, again, that faces all of us. The Federal Government cannot solve this issue alone. It is going to take the local schools, K-12, as well as community colleges, as well as universities, as well as business and industry to come together to figure out ways to solve this problem.

Of course, what we are doing with the career and technical education bill as well as with the PROSPER Act is to provide the framework for those people to do what needs to be done out there. We are taking the heavy hand of the Federal Government away and saying: We want you to make many, many decisions at the local level, colleges and universities to make decisions.

I think we are on the right track. With the leadership of Mr. WALBERG and other members of the committee, I think we are going to get there.

Mr. WALBERG. Will the gentlewoman yield?

Ms. FOXX. I yield to the gentleman from Michigan.

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Speaker, on that very point, I think it is crucial to understand that, if we are going to get people educated for real-world jobs, we are going to have to sometimes move the whole system out of its comfort zone, and that means higher education as well. It can't be assumed that that is the only game in town when, in fact,

employers are looking for something in certain cases very different and very unique and very specific, custom made to fit those jobs.

Then, as the gentlewoman knows better than probably any of us, these same employers will add to the benefit by adding additional training opportunities for these good employees to continue to upgrade their skills with more education. That is where we see higher education is going to have to compete and come to an understanding that it is a different world now and there are changes that have to take place if we are going to continue to succeed. I appreciate that point, and we need to get it done.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I again thank Mr. WALBERG for being here tonight.

Mr. Speaker, I now yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON), another stellar member of the Education and the Workforce Committee, who in the past has led the way in the area of career and technical education in particular, but is well versed in education in all areas.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairwoman FOXX for yielding and for her leadership in the area of education, workforce development, career and technical education. It is greatly appreciated and a pleasure and honor to work with the gentlewoman.

Mr. Speaker, every Member of this Chamber is familiar with the issue surrounding the skills gap. The American workforce currently faces a shortage of 6 million skilled workers. That number continues to grow at a rate faster than anybody could anticipate. We expected not to hit 6 million job openings until the year 2020, and here we are, 6.5 million jobs open and available that need to be filled here in 2018.

Employers from numerous different fields have weighed in on the issue, and the majority of employers agree that vacant positions remain unfilled because candidates lack many of the skills that they need for a given job.

While soft skills, such as communications, creativity, collaboration, and critical thinking are important for many jobs requiring daily interaction and working as part of a team, hard skills, which are learned in a classroom or a skills-based course, have significantly contributed to the skills gap.

As a senior member of the Committee on Education and the Workforce as well as co-chair of the Career and Technical Education Caucus, I believe that by modernizing the current Federal law and investing in skills-based education programs, we can begin to narrow the skills gap, put people back to work, and continue to grow this economy.

The Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act has not been updated in more than a decade. The law no longer reflects the realities and challenges facing students and workers today. Current policies restrict the

ability of State leaders to invest Federal resources and prioritize economic growth and local needs. It fails them in having the flexibility to be able to react to immediate workforce needs.

In an effort to close the skills gap, my colleague Congressman RAJA KRISHNAMOORTHY and I introduced H.R. 2353, the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act.

H.R. 2353 makes impactful changes to the law by giving authority back to the State and local leaders, who have a thorough understanding of the regional workforce; aligning career and technical education programs with high-skilled, lucrative, and in-demand jobs; and increasing transparency and accountability, while also assessing the success of skills-based education programs; and limiting the Department of Education's role in the CTE programs, empowering the State and the local leaders.

Now, while this bipartisan legislation passed the House unanimously last year and still awaits action in the Senate, in a time when critical industries have vacant jobs but not enough qualified workers to fill them, it is imperative that we work to get this bill signed into law for the prosperity of our economy and for the future of our workforce.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for the opportunity to weigh in on this important topic.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. THOMPSON for his time tonight. Again, I appreciate the work that he has done in this field session after session, and I appreciate the way he approaches his work on the Education and the Workforce Committee. We respect the gentleman greatly, and he is well respected by all of his colleagues here.

Mr. Speaker, we are all pushing to get the bill passed out of the Senate and are very, very hopeful. In addition, we keep our fingers crossed.

□ 2045

We pray, we keep our fingers crossed, and we hope.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. ALLEN), another one of the great members of the Education and the Workforce Committee.

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for her work in organizing this Special Order this evening.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight the importance of workforce development in America.

Over the past 1½ years, this Congress has been working diligently to turn this economy around and get Americans across the country back to work.

After passing the most comprehensive tax overhaul in 30 years and rolling back Obama-era rules and regulations, our economy is beginning to thrive, and the need for a developed and established workforce is more crucial right now than ever before.

The simple fact is our workforce is aging and there are not enough people

who currently have the skills to take the positions of retirees nor the thousands of private sector jobs being created every day in this new economy. And with over 6 million jobs available in this country as we speak, we have to ensure that our young people today are equipped for the job market of tomorrow.

In fact, I enjoy meeting with young people and talking about this era in which, when they are educated, they have the greatest opportunity of any generation that I am aware of to find a job in an upward economy in just about every field that they desire.

As someone who has worked in the construction industry for my entire career, I know firsthand how difficult it is to find skilled workers. And as a member of House Education and the Workforce Committee, this is why I was proud of supporting the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act and the PROSPER Act, both pieces of legislation that bridge the gap between the business community and our education efforts.

Make no mistake, getting an education is essential, but it is equally important that our education efforts are aligned with the in-demand jobs in our communities.

In order to cultivate a qualified workforce for the future, our education and business communities must work together so our kids and grandkids have the opportunity to achieve the American Dream. As I said, I believe that opportunity is the best today that it has ever been.

Back home in Georgia's 12th District, I have visited small business after small business. And one question I always ask is: What is your biggest challenge? And the answer to that question almost every single time is: Workers.

As a business owner, the greatest joy in my life was creating jobs. I look back, and I look at the buildings we built in the construction industry, and we got pretty good at it. But I will tell you, the one thing, when I look back, and the greatest joy that I had in life, was giving folks a good job, allowing them the dignity and respect that they deserve, to empower them to fulfill their God-given right to provide for their families, to provide for their communities, and yes, provide for this Nation; an opportunity I believe should be available to all Americans.

One of the top factors in where a business decides to locate is based on workforce, and with Georgia being named as the number one State to locate your business for the past 5 years in a row, our workforce needs in Georgia are growing each and every day.

I will continue to work with my colleagues in this body on the House Education and the Workforce Committee to ensure that we have an available workforce equipped with the skills necessary to jump directly into that workforce.

Mr. Speaker, again, I would like to thank Chairwoman FOXX for her lead-

ership work here and her work here this evening in bringing attention to this critical matter.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. ALLEN. He and the other members of the committee who have been here tonight, as well as Members who serve on the committee, bring real-life experiences and help us better understand what it is that we need to be doing on the committee and in the Congress.

Again, this skills gap is something that is of concern to all Americans and should be of concern to all Americans. The Education and the Workforce Committee is doing its best to present good legislation to pass here so that the Federal Government can again give the structure that is needed for business and industry to do what it needs to do.

We are the greatest country in the world. We will continue to be the greatest country in the world as long as we respond to the needs of our culture and keep our country moving in the right direction.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues again and I yield back the balance of my time.

THE HISTORY OF ROBERT MUELLER

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FERGUSON). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) for 30 minutes.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, I do appreciate the words of my friend from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX), and she has an amendment that is going to help a lot of folks in my district.

Mr. Speaker, I continue to hear some people say that they think Robert Mueller is going to be fair-minded, he is going to do a good job. But I think probably more than any of my Republican friends that profess to think they know Robert Mueller, I don't think they know him as well as I do, and on the research I have done on the man, the dealings I have had with him, the questions I have asked him.

But I don't think they know him as well as Eric Holder does, and Eric Holder said a month or so ago he has known Bob Mueller for 20, 30 years, and, in essence, he wasn't going to stop until he found something he could pin on Donald Trump.

That is the essence, and I think he is right.

We see from Robert Mueller's history that when he decides somebody is not a good person, even when he is 100 percent wrong, then it justifies in his mind putting them in prison, leaving them for the rest of their lives, destroying their lives, destroying any friendships, family, caring relationship. He doesn't care.

He has destroyed good people, completely destroyed good people, and as he has said more than once after he has destroyed good people, and in the case of Dr. Hatfill, the government had an over \$6 million payout to him for the